Using Edmodo to Incorporate WICOR Strategies in the AVID Classroom

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Abstract: Social networking sites are popular amongst middle schoolers and many students spend much of their free time on the computer. Educators struggle with finding effective ways to deliver instruction to 21st century learners. The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) class is an elective, college readiness course. Its emphasis on rigorous strategies can be a challenge to deliver. Now that many of our students are digital natives, finding solutions to enhance and improve instruction for this new generation of learners is a necessity. The purpose of this instructional design module was to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a web-based module geared towards the AVID elective teacher to deliver content using Edmodo, an educational social networking site. The module utilized surveys and participant feedback for data collection. Results indicated that the module was effective in delivering ideas on how Edmodo can be utilized to enhance not only the AVID curriculum, but other content areas as well.

Introduction

AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college readiness program for Elementary through Post Secondary grades. The AVID program is geared towards the “C” student, and students are typically the first in their family to attend college. By being in the program, these selected students

are challenged and view college more as an opportunity, rather than a dream. The AVID curriculum focuses around WICOR - Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading. These components ensure that rigor is occurring in the classroom and is the foundation of the program.

Implementing WICOR strategies can be a daunting task in itself; but couple that with the fact that many of our students are digital natives makes many teachers uncomfortable. Teachers need a tool that lets students transmit their ideas not by voice but by the written word, or letting them spend more time thinking about their word choices before typing caters to multiple learning preferences and therefore helps students become engaged in a way that's most comfortable for them (Duffy, 2011). Both of these are areas that teachers struggle with and will be addressed in this study by utilizing a social networking site created for teachers, students and parents. Studies show that by interacting or collaborating *around* technology, not just *with* technology, it is changing practices and pedagogies (Edwards-Groves, 2012). Furthermore, social networking sites bring about higher quality products and students become more sensitive at critiquing others' work due to the larger viewing audience (Casey & Evans, 2011).

The purpose of this instructional design project was to evaluate the effectiveness of a web-based module to help teachers incorporate WICOR strategies in the classroom using Edmodo, a social networking site, at an Oahu public intermediate school. Edmodo, with its Facebook- like interface, has been utilized as a "digital way to communicate, collaborate and create not only with people in the classroom, but with people from all over" (Dobler, 2012). The target audience for this module is 7-8th grade AVID elective teachers, but can be extended and adapted to any classroom teacher wanting to incorporate technology into their curriculum. Subject Matter Experts will be classroom teachers, administrators, and curriculum resource teachers.

Methods

Instructional Strategies

The ADDIE model, which is an instructional design process developed by Dick and Carey, was used to guide the development of the module. In the ADDIE model, analysis is the input for the system; design, development and evaluation are the processes; and implementation is the output (Hodell, 2011).

In this study, participants went through a module that was created using Weebly, an online website creation tool. The module started off with an introduction that explained its purpose and a video that explained what Edmodo was about. Participants were then instructed to create an Edmodo account and then join an AVID and Edmodo group that was created for this module.

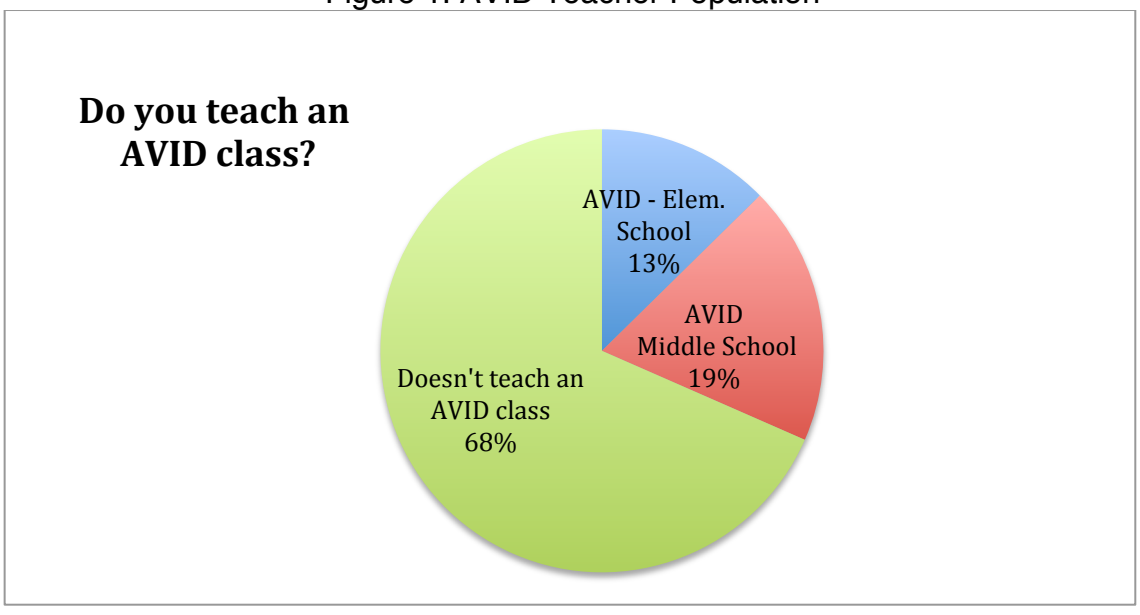
The rest of the module was divided into 5 different sections that focused on each of the WICOR strategies. Each section followed a format: (1) A short Voki video was shown that gave background information on the WICOR strategy. (2) A sample lesson that was implemented in the researcher's 7th Grade AVID classroom that addressed the particular strategy using Edmodo. (3) Teacher Tech Help section that explains how to utilize the technology mentioned in the lesson. Instructions were developed using You Tube videos and self-created instructional videos using Jing, an online screencasting program (4) Before moving on to the next section, participants were encouraged to give feedback in the AVID and Edmodo group on how they could apply what was learned in the section to their own classroom.

Results

Population

A Call for Participation email was sent to colleagues and teachers who were exposed to the AVID program.

Figure 1. AVID Teacher Population



Although 68% of participants were classroom teachers, only 32% of those teachers taught an AVID class, either at the elementary or middle school level (Figure 1).

Data Collection

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from pre- and post- surveys that were created using Google Forms and embedded into the Weebly site. These surveys were developed to measure the effectiveness of the module using Likert-Scale questions and open-ended questions. To ensure that the surveys remained anonymous, participants were asked to create a random number using a "Secret Code Generator" that was embedded using random.org. Participants used the same number for the Pre- and Post- survey.

Learning

Results indicate that learners found the module useful in terms of technology integration.

Figure 2: Pre-Survey Results of WICOR and Technology Integration

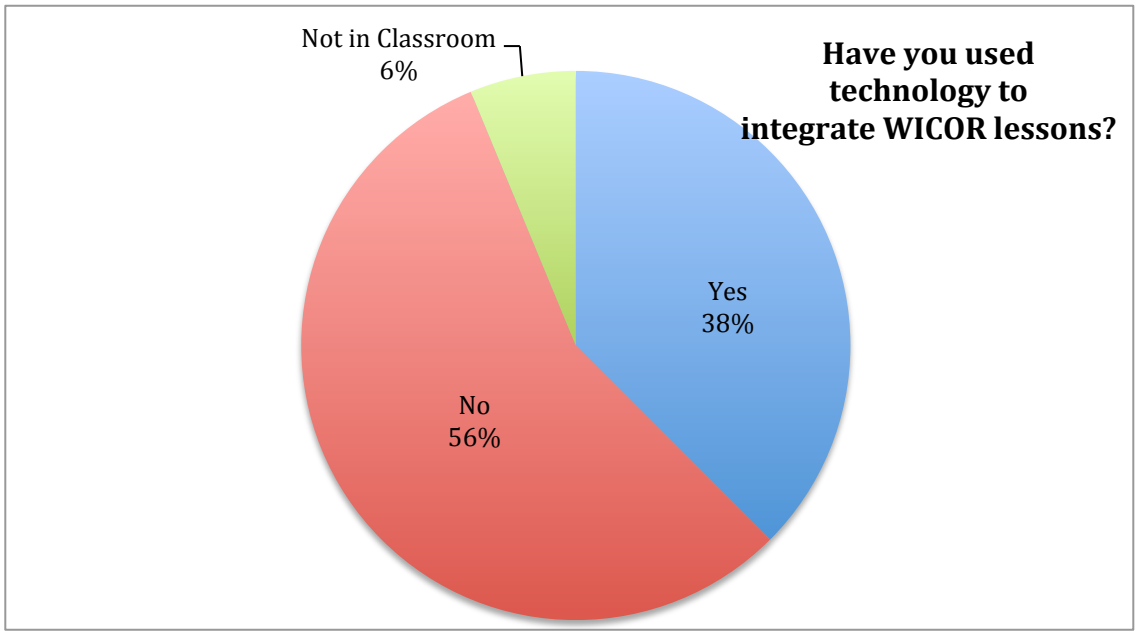
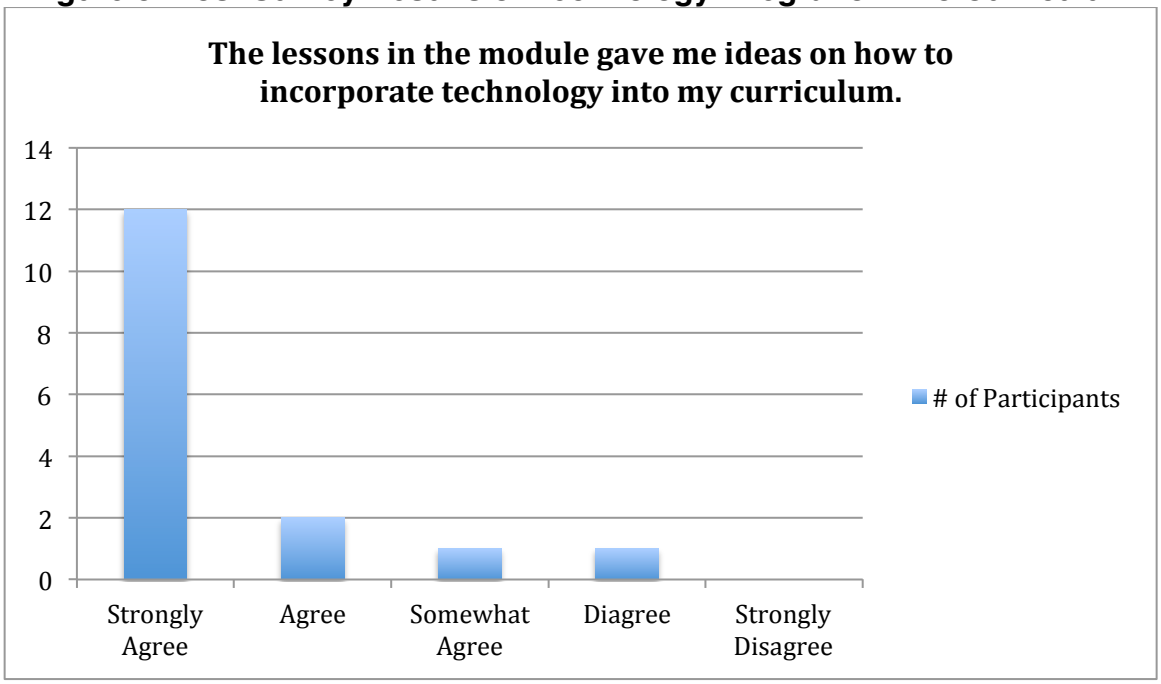


Figure 3: Post Survey Results of Technology Integration Into Curriculum



Pre-survey results indicate that more than half of the participants had not used technology to integrate WICOR lessons (Figure 2) and that the majority of participants strongly agree that the module gave ideas for technology integration in their curriculum (Figure 3).

Figure 4: Pre Survey Results of Familiarity with Edmodo

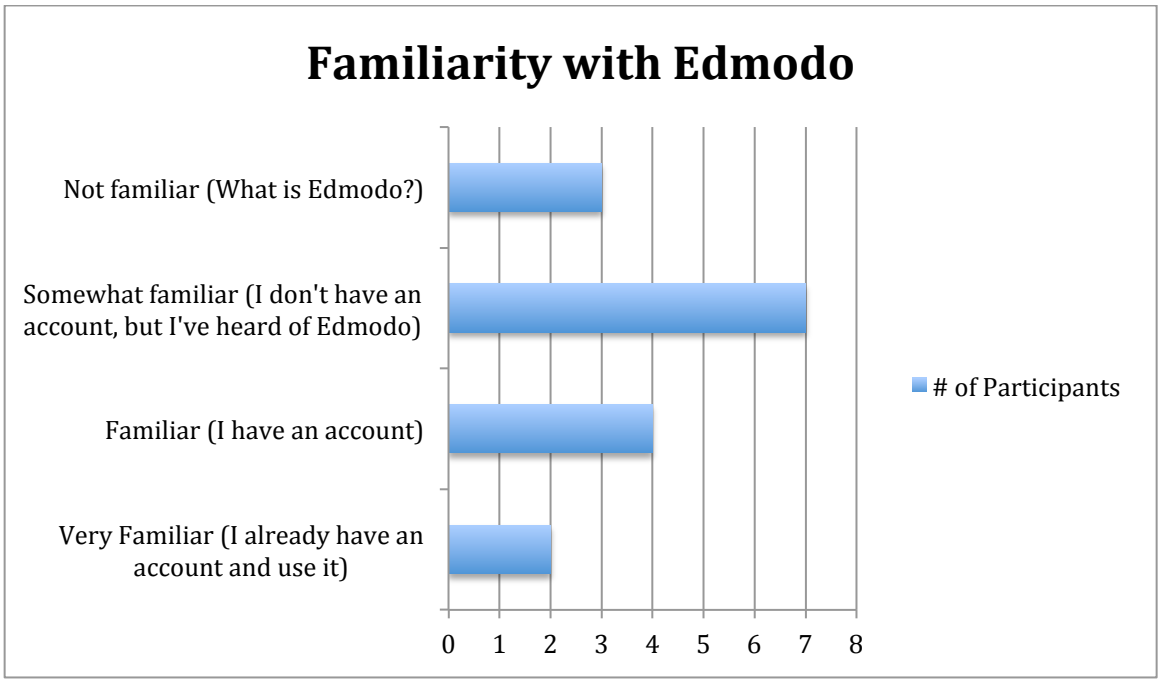
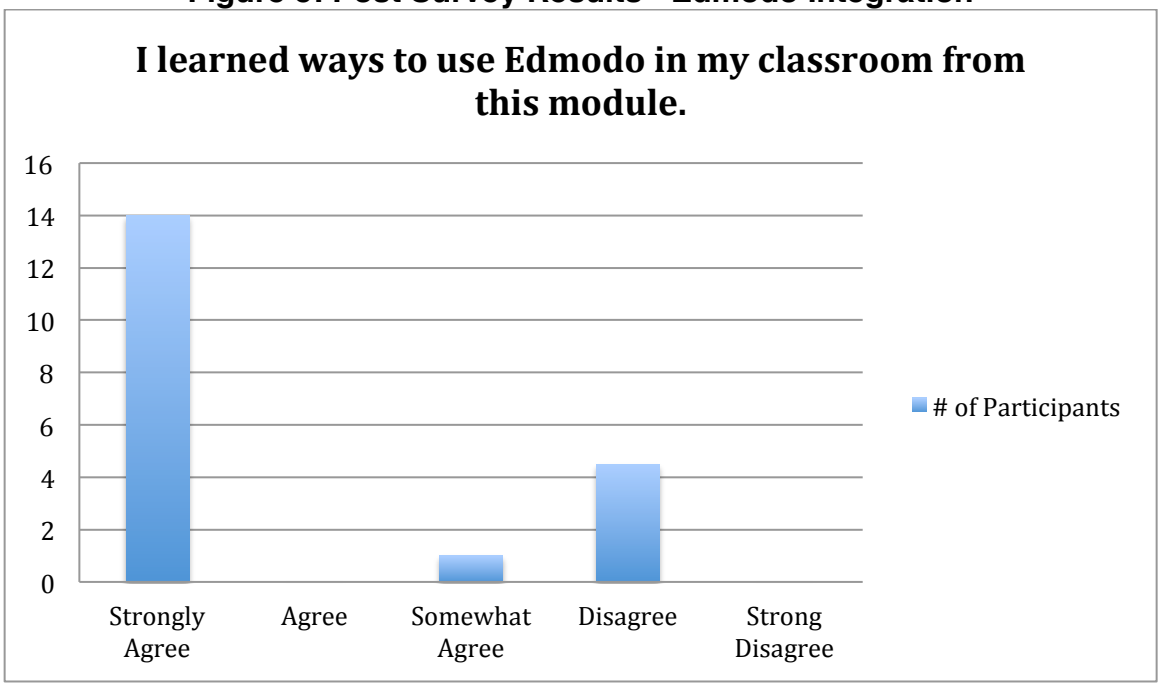


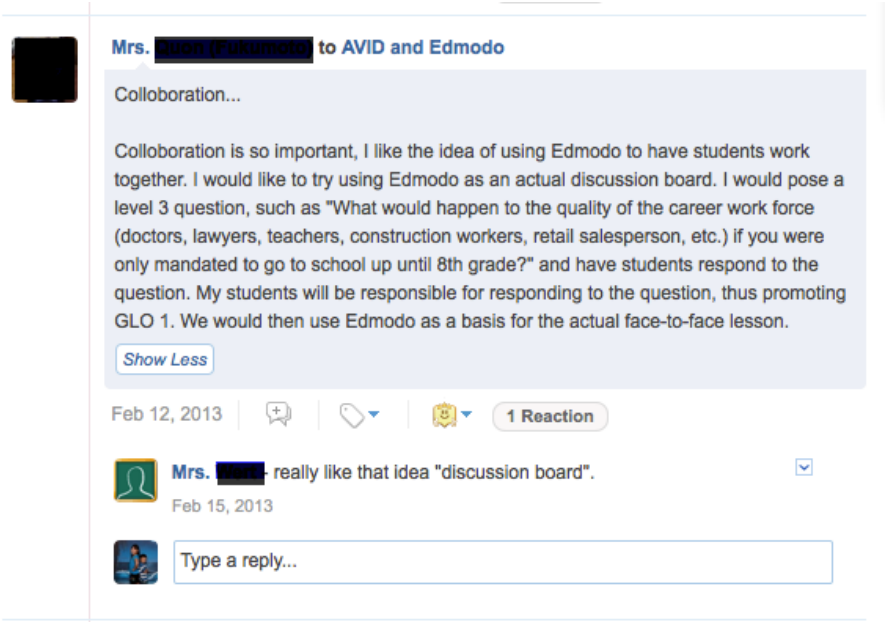
Figure 5: Post Survey Results - Edmodo Integration



Application of Learning

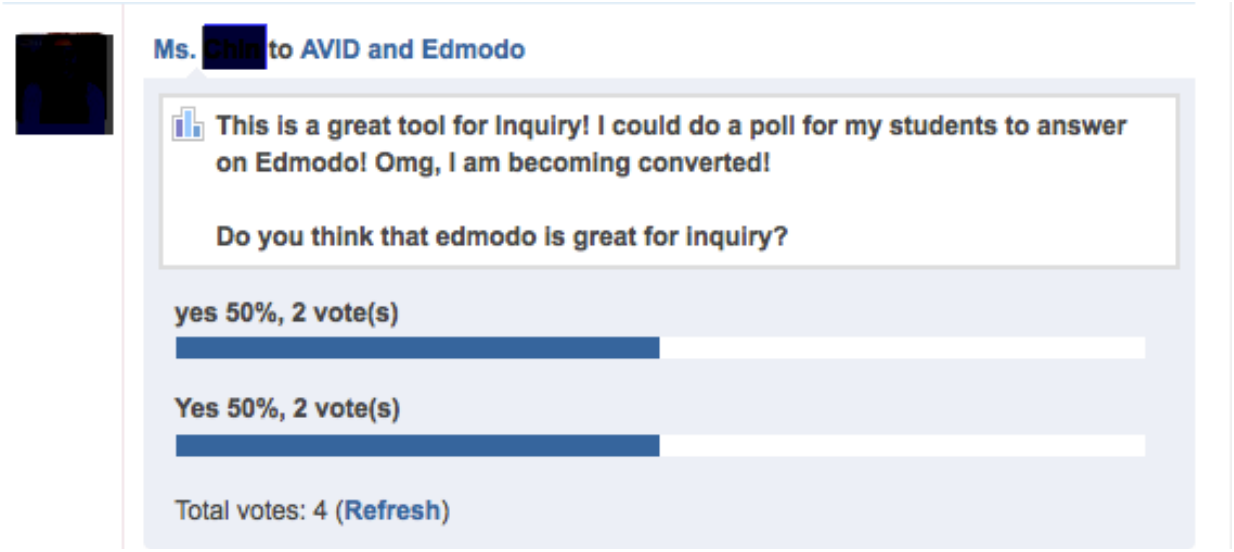
It is evident that the greatest learning took place in the AVID and Edmodo group that participants were directed to join when going through the module. This was an indication that participant's were not merely "going through the motion" of the module and were professionally collaborating with one another.

Figure 6: Screenshot of Edmodo Posts in "AVID and Edmodo" Group



Participants were asked to post how they would adapt what was learned in the module to their own classroom. Figure 6 shows 1 participant responding to another participant's post.

Figure 7: Another Screenshot of Edmodo Post in "AVID and Edmodo" Group



Although not part of the module, participants were experimenting with the features that Edmodo offers. Other participants were responding as indicated in Figure 7.

Implications or Discussion

A few problems occurred during the data collection phase. First being that 20 people signed consent forms to participate in the study, yet 16 people completed the Pre-Survey, and 15 people completed the Post-Survey.

One participant was not able to complete the module because of computer sound issues, and noted that his Post-Survey answers would be invalid, as noted below:

> My ratings would be invalid because I was not able to view the videos of the module to make any valid rating. Closed captions might have been useful in this situation. The sound on my computer was not working so I could not hear any of the videos for it to be useful. I was able to follow a little of some sections, but it was difficult and frustrating.

Another participant mentioned that the screen was small, as the module did not give instructions on how to make the screen bigger.

> The only thing that maybe could use improvement was the ability to see the tutorials as the teacher was talking. It was small and difficult for me to see and follow.

Conclusion

Social Networking sites can play an effective role, not only in the AVID classroom, but in any classroom. The use of Edmodo groups are powerful not only for classroom use, but professional collaboration as well.

It is the hope of the researcher that the AVID and Edmodo group continues to grow with interested teachers who are looking for more ways to ingrate WICOR strategies into their curriculum.

Overall, the study recommends that:

1. Subtitles or PDF versions of tutorials be created for video portion of modules
2. Directions be given on more of the basics of watching online videos (Making screen bigger, etc)

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